THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K. P. SlNGH DEO) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. Government have notified the Head Post Masters of the Head Post Offices in the country as the Registering Authority for registering cable operators, under clause (h) of Section 2 of the Cable television Networks (Regulation) Ordinance, 1994.

(c) to (e) The Department of of Posts have designated Head Post Offices to register cable operators circle-wise.

Numbers of Doordarshan Channels

1010. SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) what is the number of Doordarshan Channels at present ;

(b) whether it is a fact that Government propose ro raise the number of channels considerably; and

(c) what is the increased number of proposed and by when the target is likely to be achieved ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO) ; (a) Thirteen, Sir. one channel, DD-3, is presently offthe air.

(b) and (c) Doordarshan is exploring the possibility of using tbe digital compression technology as a Pilot Project to increase its channel capacity beyond its existing thirteen channel to sixty channels. No firm date can be indicated for accomplishing this task.

Foreign Media Entry

1011, SHRl VIREN J. SHAH:
DR. BAPU KALDATE:
SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA :
SHRI JAGIR SINGH DARD :

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) what is the latest position about the proposal for the foreign media entry in the country ;

(b) whether it is a fact that in 1980 the Second Press Commission headed by Justice K.K. Mathew had considered and opposed such a proposal ;

(c) whether it is also a fact that in June 1993, the Press Council stated that it does not favour publication of foreign newspapers/_ jour nals in India involving equity of management participation :

(d) whether the Chairman of the Press Councils of India, Justice R.S. Sarkaria has recently stated as reported in the 'Times of India' of September 7, 1994 that "The majority of Press Council members have vehemently opposed it, as they feel it is not right.";

(e) whether Government formally consulted the Press Council on this issue, if so, what is its advice in the matter ; and

(f) whether Government will suitably consider the views recommendations of the authorities referred to above on this issue before coming to a final decision ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K. P. SINGH DEOj : (a) The Government continues to be guided by the policy decision of

1955 in the matter of entry of foreign print media in the country.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Press Council expressed such views in June, 1992.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) Yes. Sir. The Press Council did not favour publication of foreign newspapers/journals in India involving equity and management parti-ci pation. Printing of foreign journals in India was also felt to be undesirab'e though a few members did express the view that this might be permitted with suitable safeguards pertaining to such matters as national employment and repatriation of profits or on a case to case basis.

(f) Yes, Sir.

Procedural wrangles hit 89 I & B projects-A news items

1012. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report published in the observer of October 24, 1994 under the caption, "Procedural wrangles hit 89 I & B projects";

(b) if so, what are the facts and necessary details in this regard;

(c) how many of these projects belong to Doordarshan and AIR separately and what is the latest position about the completion of each of the projects ;

(d) which are the tribal and rural areas where TV signals have not yet been made available and by when these are expected to become available; and

(e) how many new statellite and FM channels are proposed to be introduced and what steps have been taken or proposed to be taken to recruit and adequately train the additional staff required for these channels ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Out of 21 project of AlR, 7 projects have been commissioned since then including 2 where staff have been taken on tour. Since Oct. 94 a total of 85 TV projects have been commissioned including 34 projects where staff have been temporarily rearranged pending staff sanction and recruitment.

(d) TV service in the country is being expanded in a phased manner depending upon availability of resources. Rural population of the country including that in tribal areas is presently covered to the extent of about 82 %. With the comp letion of transmitter projects presently under implementation/envisaged to be set up, about 89.8% rural popu lation is expected to be brought under TV coverage inclusive of the population in firinge areas, where elevated antennae and boosters are required for obtaining reception.

(e) 49 new FM transmitters of AIR and a pilot project for telecast ing 5 TV channels through a single satellite transponder have been under taken by the Government, the recruitment for various posts is being done as per rules and the training to the Programme as well as Technical staff in respect of AIR and Doordarshan both is given by the Staff Training Institute (Prog ramme) and (Technical) from time to time.